

A cultural congruence test for primary school students

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Abstract

© Lomonosov Moscow State University, 2016. The study presented in this article relies on the principles of the cultural-historical theory, which defines cultural impact as the main driving force behind psychological development. Based on the assumption that culture is a set of normative situations, the study identifies rules that are typical for primary school students in big Russian cities. These rules are grouped into what we refer to as factors of cultural compliance, which ultimately can be seen as indicators of pupils' cultural congruence. In specifying the cultural congruence of primary school students, we take into account not only the rules of school life but also the whole range of stable rules for children 7- to 10-years-old. Researchers at the Psychology Institute of the Higher University of the Chinese Academy of Science (Wang, Zhu, & Shi, 2011) call such rules usual or contextually usual. We include rules that govern the behavior of children who have cultural differences, so in this article we are talking about the rules that are typical for children of this age in Russia. The goal of the study was to develop a test to diagnose the level of cultural congruence. The test was exposed to psychometric evaluation for validity, reliability, and discriminatory power. Factor analysis by means of varimax rotation provided for calibration of the rules by consolidating them into factors. These factors underpin the test and include the categories social interaction, academic competence, regulation, obedience, self-service, and self-control. In accordance with the principles employed in psychology, the factors confirm the construct validity of the test in relation to children's development when they are between 7 and 10 years old. The study confirms that learning is the main activity at this age by introducing a factor that brings together rules inherent in normative situations in the education process. The social setting for psychological development, viewed as a specific relationship between a child at the given age and the environment, is determined by the child's interaction with an adult. The factor of obedience is the key parameter for children of the age under consideration. New at this age are arbitrariness, self-regulation, self-analysis, and an internal action plan. Self-control is also conceptually linked to these factors. The study offers a new look at the cultural determination of psychological development in ontogenesis. Validated in the course of the investigations, the test can be used to diagnose cultural congruence - that is, the compliance of a primary school student with rules inherent in normative situations.

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Keywords

Cultural congruence, Discriminatory power, Normative situation, primary school student, Reliability, Validity